

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated April 27, 2006, claim 28 was objected to as lacking antecedent basis for the term "said vapor permeable body". Applicant amends claim 28 to remove this term from the claim and replace it with "said core", which does have proper antecedent basis in claim 1.

Claims 1,3,4,6,8 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Hoopingarner et al in view of Brayden et al.

Hoopingarner et al. teaches planar composite panels in which the edges of core 32 are surrounded by a closed-cell foam border 34. The combination of face sheets 31 and foam border 34 have been found by the Examiner to constitute an impermeable barrier around the core 32. In addition, the foam border 34 is embossed with indentations 82 that are specifically provided as outlets to allow venting of volatile gases from the core 32 during curing of phenolic resin (col. 5, lines 54 to 62).

In accordance with applicant's invention, the impermeable barrier that surrounds the core includes an inlet through which a pressurization media is introduced to pressurize the panel skins against the mold during formation of the composite panel. This is substantially different from Hoopingarner et al.'s teaching of an outlet through which volatile gases escape from the core during curing. This exhausting of gases is exactly the opposite of applicant's invention where gases or liquids are introduced through an inlet into the core.

In order to more particularly point out applicant's invention and distinguish it from Hoopingarner et al., applicant amends claim 1 to require that the sandwich panel be made according to a process in which a pressurization media is introduced into the core through an inlet in the barrier to provide pressurization of the impermeable chamber that surrounds the core. Support for the term "pressurization media" is found in the last

line of Paragraph 20 of applicant's specification. In addition, new claims 29 and 30 are presented to claim further details of the pressurization media.

Applicant's claims, as now amended, require that an inlet be provided in the impermeable barrier through which a pressurization media is introduced into the core to provide pressurization thereof. As pointed out above, this is substantially different from Hoopingarner et al., which specifically teaches providing outlets through which volatile gases escape to prevent pressurization of the core.

The rejections regarding the remaining dependent claims will not be discussed in detail, since they derive their patentability from claim 1. As discussed above, claim 1, as now amended is patentably distinct from Hoopingarner et al.

Brayden et al. is a vacuum bag process that uses a tube 26 to allow the introduction or withdrawal of gases from the core (Col. 5, lines 12-36). However, there is no teaching regarding applicant's use of an impermeable barrier in a molding process where the barrier is placed between the composite skins and the core to form an impermeable chamber that is pressurized during molding.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, applicant respectfully requests that this application be reexamined and allowed.

Respectfully submitted,

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